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TAGS: PREL PHUM BO RS AF OSCE EI EUN  
SUBJECT: IRELAND: NOVEMBER GAERC, BELARUS, OSCE

REF: A. ELIZABETH KONICK E-MAIL 11/09/2009

1B. BRUSSELS 1504

1C. STATE 112644

1D. HUIZINGA/FAUCHER E-MAILS 11/10/2009

Classified By: Political-Economic Section Chief Dwight Nystrom. Reason  
s 1.4(b/d).

11. (U) On November 10 Poloff spoke with Peter Ryan, European Correspondent in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) about the EU FMs, GAERC meeting on November 16-17. Separately, Poloff delivered ref C demarche on Belarus to Michael Forbes, DFA Director for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Our interlocutors had the following comments:

12. (C) Russia: Our interlocutors said the key to improved relations with Russia was the U.S. and EU shifting the dialogue towards addressing common concerns (just as emphasized in ref A), while remaining frank on issues, such as Georgia, on which we disagree. Ryan reported on recent Irish-Polish consultations he had attended with the Irish Political Director David Donoghue. Donoghue's Polish counterparts reported that the Russians had expressed to them (the Poles) appreciation of the U.S. "reset" toward Russia. In private discussions with the Poles, the Russians had shown "more openness" than they would publicly toward finding common solutions with the U.S. and EU to "thorny third-country issues."

13. (C) On Ukraine and Somalia, Ryan and Forbes expressed agreement with ref A non-paper. Ryan reported that consensus in the Donoghue-Polish consultations (para 3) had been that domestic politics in Ukraine would trump the leadership's working together on fulfilling IMF commitments until the presidential elections in early 2010.

14. (C) Belarus: Forbes said consensus among EU member states appeared to be forming around a compromise not to lift the EU's sanctions on Belarus now, but to revisit the issue in a few months. He said some of the former East Bloc states in the EU were arguing for more engagement with Belarus, so continuing the suspension of sanctions, rather than lifting them altogether, would require such a compromise. Forbes did not know whether the mandate for sanctions would be extended beyond March 2010. He agreed that continued U.S.-EU coordination of Belarus policy would be very important, and said Ireland agreed that lifting of sanctions was not in order at the moment. He added that continued efforts to engage the GOB, and a willingness to recalibrate Belarus policy if the GOB makes progress on the reform process, were also necessary.

15. (C) OSCE: On a separate note, Forbes told us that Ireland's decision to take on the 2012 OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office was not yet final (ref D). With the huge budget deficit the government is facing, he said, the Department of Foreign Affairs is under pressure to make large cuts (for example, possible closing of several embassies). In that context, the financial implications of being the CIO

are the biggest question. Forbes said if high-level U.S. officials could stress to Irish counterparts U.S. support for Ireland's being CIO in 2012, that would greatly help Irish Foreign Minister Martin in his budget deliberations at cabinet level.

FAUCHER